



LOCAL HELP FOR PEOPLE WITH MEDICARE

Ask SHIP

July, 2008
Sarah Reimmuth

Q: I'm making an effort to be proactive about my health. Does Medicare pay for any types of vaccines?

A: Since the start of Medicare Part D, Medicare pays for more vaccines. The Part B program covers most vaccines needed by those on Medicare. The Part D program generally covers vaccines not available under Part B.

It is important to know which vaccines are covered under which plan. Any vaccines that were previously covered by Part B, continue to be covered by Part B.

Part B Covers:

- **Pneumococcal pneumonia vaccine (Pneumonia Shot)**
Medicare began covering this vaccine in 1981. Medicare pays for one pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine. One vaccine at age 65 generally provides coverage for a lifetime, but for some high risk persons, a booster vaccine is needed. Medicare will also cover a booster vaccine for high risk persons if their last vaccine was more than 5 years ago. Medicare covers the cost of the vaccine and

its administration by your healthcare provider. There is no coinsurance or co-payment applied to this benefit, and you do not have to meet your deductible to receive this benefit.

- **Influenza virus vaccine (The Flu Shot)**
Medicare began covering annual flu shots in 1993 for all Medicare beneficiaries. Medicare covers the cost of the vaccine and its administration by recognized providers. There is no coinsurance or co-payment applied to this benefit, and you do not have to meet your deductible to receive this benefit.
- **Hepatitis B Vaccine**
Medicare began covering Hepatitis B vaccinations in 1984 for persons at high or intermediate risk. Medicare covers both the costs of the vaccine and its administration. The coinsurance or co-payment applies after your yearly deductible has been met.
- **Other vaccines are covered** when they are directly related to the treatment of an injury or direct exposure to

a disease or condition. For example, Medicare will cover a tetanus shot if you step on a nail.

Part D Covers:

The Part D program generally covers those vaccines not paid for by Parts A or B, such as the shingles vaccine (herpes zoster). The vaccine must be reasonable and necessary for the prevention of illness.

During 2007, providers were permitted to bill Part B for the administration of a Part D vaccine using a special code (G0377). This is no longer the case.

Beginning January 1, 2008 doctors, clinics, and non-participating pharmacies that provide vaccines must bill the patient for the vaccine and its administration. The patient must submit the claim to their Part D plan for reimbursement. However, participating pharmacies can provide vaccines and only charge the co-pay determined by your drug plan.

Before you get a vaccination, you should check coverage rules with your Part D drug

SHIP is a free, unbiased counseling program provided by the Indiana State Department of Insurance. For assistance, call your local SHIP site to make an appointment or call the state office at 1-800-452-4800 to obtain a list of local SHIP sites.

plan and see where you should get your shot so that it is covered at the lowest cost. You will need to make sure you follow your particular plan's rules in order for the vaccine to be covered.

For more information about Medicare reimbursement of vaccines or any other Medicare related question, call SHIP at 1-800-452-4800.

Ask SHIP
714 West 53rd Street
Anderson, IN 46013
Or www.Medicare.in.gov
1-800-452-4800